

REVIEWED BY *H. H. H. H.*

DATE

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10/20/62

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Good evening, my fellow citizens:

☐ CLASSIFIED☐ DOWNGRADED TO ( )☐ AS OF ( )☐ C. OADR

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance

of the communist military build-up on the island of Cuba. Only within the last week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive nuclear missile <sup>bases</sup> is now under intensive preparation on that unhappy island.

Four and possibly five of these bases are Medium Range Ballistic missile sites, containing 4 launchers each, with two missiles to be loaded on each launcher. Each of these 32 missiles <sup>is</sup> capable of carrying a 3000 pound nuclear warhead of 2 megatons in yield or more -- at least 100 times as destructive as the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima -- for a distance of more than 1000 nautical miles. Each of these 32 missiles, in short, is capable of wiping out Washington, D.C., the Panama Canal, Cape Canaveral, Florida, Mexico City, or any other city in the Southeastern part of the United States, in central America or in the Caribbean area.

Eight other launch-pads now under construction in two separate sites appear to be designed for sixteen Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles -- capable of travelling more than twice as far and causing several times as much destruction -- and thus capable of devastating most of the United States mainland, most of Latin America, and most of Canada. In addition, large numbers of medium range jet bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, are now being uncrated on Cuba, while appropriate air bases are being prepared.

This urgent transformation of Cuba into a prime strategic base by the presence of these large, long-range and clearly offensive weapons of sudden destruction constitutes an open threat to the peace and security of all the

Americans -- in naked and deliberate defiance of the Rio Pact of 1947, the traditions of this nation and Hemisphere, the Joint Resolution of the 87th Congress and my own warnings to the communists on September 4 and 13. This action also contradicts the repeated assurances of Soviet and Cuban spokesmen, both publicly and privately delivered, that the arms build-up in Cuba would retain its original defensive character.

The size of this undertaking makes clear that it had been planned some months ago. Yet only last month, after I had clearly stated that ground-to-ground missiles would be regarded as an offensive threat, the Soviet Government stated that "the armaments and military equipment sent to Cuba are designed exclusively for defensive purposes", that "there is no need for the Soviet Union to shift its weapons ... for a retaliatory blow (that is, its strategic or offensive weapons) to any other country, for instance Cuba", and that "the Soviet Union has so powerful rockets to carry these nuclear warheads that there is no need to search for sites for them beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union."

Only last Thursday, as this offensive build-up was going on, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told me in my office that he was instructed to make it clear once again, as he said the Soviet Government had already done, that Soviet assistance to Cuba "pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba" that -- "training by Soviet specialists of Cuban nationals in handling defensive armaments was by no means offensive," and that "if it were otherwise, the Soviet Government would have never become involved in rendering such assistance."

The United States of America need not and cannot tolerate ~~defensive, disruption and~~ offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute an "armed attack" under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Nuclear weapons are so destructive, and ballistic missiles are so swift, that any increased possibility of their use or any sudden change in the nature of their threat may well require an act of self-defense.

For many years, both the Soviet Union and the United States -- recognizing this principle -- have deployed such weapons with great care, never upsetting the precarious status quo which balanced off the use of these weapons in the absence of some vital challenge. These deployments are not, of course, comparable. Our own weapons systems, such as Polaris and Minuteman, have never been secretly transferred to the territory of any other nation, and they have always emphasized invulnerability -- because they are intended to be retaliatory not offensive, and because our history, unlike that of the Soviets since World War II, -- demonstrates that we have no desire to dominate or conquer other nations or impose our system upon them. Nevertheless, American citizens have become adjusted to living daily on the bull's eye of Soviet missiles located inside the USSR or in submarines. In that sense, our danger today has not been greatly increased.

~~But this~~ ~~action~~, secret and extraordinary build-up of communist missiles in an area well-known to have a special and historical relationship to the United States, in violation of Soviet assurances, in departure from the Soviet practice of stationing strategic weapons only on Soviet soil, and in defiance of American and hemispheric policy, is a provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country, if our courage and our commitments are ever to be believed in the future by either friend or foe.

If the 1930's taught us any lesson at all, it was that aggressive conduct, if allowed to grow unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war. This nation is opposed to war. We are also true to our word. Our unwavering objective, therefore, must be to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the use of these missiles against this or any other country, and to secure the withdrawal or elimination of these missiles from within the Western Hemisphere. I am so informing President Dorticos of Cuba and Soviet Chairman Khrushchev by separate messages already dispatched.

Acting, therefore, in the defense of our own security and that of the entire Western Hemisphere, and with the authority entrusted to me by the ~~Constitution~~ as enforced by the Resolution of the Congress, I have directed that the following initial steps be taken immediately:

1) First: to halt this offensive build-up, there is to be initiated a full blockade on all offensive weapons under shipment to Cuba, including any material such as petroleum which is essential to the operation of these

weapons. Such a blockade can clearly be authorized both by the requirements of U. S. self-defense and by the Organ of Consultation of the Organization of American States, acting under Articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Treaty and this year's Punta del Este Resolution. All ships bound for Cuba, from whatever nation or port, will be halted and searched -- and those which are found to contain cargoes of weapons, and those which refuse to halt, will be dealt with appropriately under the rules of international law. Such a blockade may be extended, if needed, to any other type of cargo and carrier. And let me make it clear that this blockade will not only prevent completion of the current offensive build-up on Cuba. It will also require the Soviet Union to choose between fighting the American Navy in American waters, or abandoning its <sup>offensive build-up in Cuba and request of Cuba</sup> obligations to Mr. Castro. It will also have, in a <sup>to decide whether it will offend the interests of its own</sup> comparatively short time, a profound effect on the military, economic and <sup>people on some subject that is just beyond the scope of the blockade.</sup> political underpinnings of the Castro regime; and it will be continued. I <sup>in foreign and defense power</sup> can assure you, until all missiles and offensive bases are gone from that island.

2) Second: I have directed our <sup>2</sup> military forces to continue and increase <sup>our</sup> close surveillance of Cuba and its military build-up, as contemplated in the OAS Communiqué of October 6; to take further <sup>American</sup> military action if that <sup>missile inspection continues</sup> build-up continues, threatens and so requires; and to include these air and missile bases on the targeting system of our strategic and retaliatory forces.

3) Third, it shall be the policy of this nation to regard any missile launched from Cuba as an attack by the Soviet Union requiring a massive retaliatory response upon the Soviet Union.

4) Fourth, we shall urge the UN and the OAS to demand removal of these offensive weapons, and the prompt dispatch of an international inspection team to make certain that this is done.

5) Fifth, to bring further economic pressure on the Castro regime, and increase its heavy cost to the Soviet Union, I am issuing a directive -- following up the embargo on U. S. trade which I imposed last February -- designed to deter the ships of all nations which trade with the United States from ferrying arms or communist cargoes of any kind to Cuba. Tight restrictions on American flag ships went into effect last month; and all American shipments and freights to Cuba are now to be halted.

6) Sixth, as a necessary military precaution, I have reinforced our base at Guantanamo, evacuated the dependents of our personnel there and ordered additional military units to stand by on an alert basis.

7) Seventh, our allies in both NATO and the OAS have been alerted, the call for the OAS meeting to which I referred has already gone out; our case against this serious threat to peace will be presented to the UN; and we shall, in addition, shortly convene a Caribbean security meeting to work out cooperative means of halting the clandestine movement of subversive agents and materials between Cuba and Latin America.

④ ~~Firstly~~, I am asking Soviet Chairman Khrushchev, who will shortly be coming to the United Nations meeting in New York, to meet with me at the earliest opportunity with respect to <sup>the recent</sup> ~~this~~ provocative threat to world peace and to the relations between our two countries. We do not wish to war with the Soviet Union -- we are a peaceful people who desire to live in peace with all other peoples. I am prepared to discuss with the Soviet Chairman -- and our spokesmen are prepared to discuss in the United Nations -- how both sides might remove existing tensions instead of creating new ones. We would be prepared to discuss the possibility of a neutral and independent Cuba, free from foreign bases of any kind and free to determine its own destiny. This nation's constructive and hopeful attitude toward the removal of tensions was most recently shown in our acquiescence in the Iranian Government's announcement that it would not permit the establishment of foreign missile bases upon its territory. It has been shown in our efforts to end the arms race and to eliminate all overseas bases in a fair and effective treaty. <sup>disarmament</sup> But we will not negotiate with a gun at our heads -- a gun that imperils innocent Cubans as well as Americans. Our byword is: "negotiation yes, intimidation no". That is why this latest communist threat -- or any other threat which is made either independently or in response to our blockade -- must and will be met with determination. And, therefore, while any talks go on, our forces all over the world will be alert -- and the blockade will remain. Any Soviet show of force at Berlin, for example, will be met in Berlin by whatever action is warranted -- although any such Soviet response, notwithstanding let me make clear, could not possibly be justified or compared to our blockade, inasmuch as the Western Allies have never imported ~~into~~ strategic weapons into West Berlin.

By ~~himself~~ himself, I have directed the United States Information Agency to use all available resources in making clear our position to the captive people of Cuba. We have no quarrel with the Cuban people, only sympathy and hope. They did not consent to the building of this target for nuclear war. Their lives and land are being used as pawns by those who deny them freedom. We have no wish to war on them, or impose any system upon them. Our objective, on the contrary, is to give them back the dream of their own revolution -- the dream of liberty and justice for all which Fidel Castro repudiated when he sold them out to the communists who may now sell him out in turn. Many times in the past the Cuban people have risen to throw out tyrants, foreign and domestic, who destroyed their liberty and exploited their economy. And I have no doubt that the vast majority of Cubans today looks forward to the time when they will once again be free -- free to choose their own leaders, to select their own system, to own their own land, to speak and write and worship without fear or degradation. Our nation's basic objective in the world is peace and freedom -- and that includes the peace and freedom of the Cuban people.

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My fellow citizens: let no one doubt that this is a difficult and dangerous effort on which we have set out. No one can foresee precisely what course it will take or what costs or casualties will be incurred. Many months of sacrifice and self-discipline lie ahead -- months in which both our will and our patience will be tested by those who would have us do more and those who would have us do less. But the path we have chosen for the



present, as recommended by my principal military and foreign policy advisors, is consistent with our character and courage as a nation, and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high -- but Americans have always paid it. One path we shall never choose -- the path of surrender or submission. I tell you, therefore, that those misadventures now in Cuba will ~~never~~ go -- and no others will take their place.

Our goal is not the victory of might but the vindication of right -- not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this Hemisphere, and hopefully around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved.

**TRANSCRIBED PAGES FOLLOW**

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